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First Committee
11th meeting
Tuesday, 19 October 2004, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. De Alba ..... (Mexico)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 57 to 72 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we proceed with the introduction of cluster 1 draft resolutions, on nuclear weapons, I would like to give the floor to delegations that were not able to speak yesterday in the informal part of our meeting to comment on issues under the heading of nuclear weapons.

Let me recall that there will be no record of statements in the informal segment of our meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 10.15 a.m. and resumed at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. Paranhos (Brazil): On behalf of New Zealand and Brazil, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

Together, the five nuclear-weapon-free zones created by the Treaties of the Antarctic, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba cover the major parts of the southern hemisphere. The States parties to those Treaties are determined to continue to contribute to the prevention of nuclear weapons in all its aspects and to the process of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, in particular in the field of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, with a view to strengthening international peace and security in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The important contribution made by the nuclear-weapon-free zones to international peace and security must be matched by the granting of unconditional negative security assurances to their member States. We welcome the efforts being made towards the completion of the ratification process of all the Treaties. Furthermore, we welcome the recent announcement by the Government of Mexico of the convening of an international conference of States members of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We hope the draft resolution can count on the broadest support of member States.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Brazil for the brevity of his statement and appeal to all representatives who shall introduce draft resolutions to do so briefly, wherever possible. We all have the texts of the draft resolutions before us and I believe it would be a good practice to refer delegations to those texts, rather than to read them out. I also think statements of support for draft resolutions should be limited, especially from co-sponsors. We

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shall assume that all co-sponsors enthusiastically support the contents of the relevant draft resolution and I therefore call for moderation.

I now call on the representative of Myanmar to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.26.

Mr. Aye (Myanmar): I shall try to be as brief as possible.

I have the honour and privilege to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.26, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mongolia, Namibia, Nepal, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Timor-Leste, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe and my own delegation, Myanmar. Additionally, Cambodia and Thailand have joined as co-sponsors.

Draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.26 is easily recognized as our traditional draft resolution, submitted annually since 1995. It is sponsored by all the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and many countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), reflecting the views of the great majority of NAM countries.

There can be no denying that, on the issue of arms control and disarmament, the urgency of nuclear disarmament commands paramount importance. In our endeavours to create a world totally free of the menace of nuclear weapons, we need to take a step-by-step approach to reduce and ultimately eliminate such weapons. Hence, that vision of humankind is reflected in the preambular parts of the draft resolution.

The draft recalls the Final Document of the Fourteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Durban, South Africa, and also reaffirms the specific mandate conferred by the General Assembly on the United Nations Disarmament Commission to discuss nuclear disarmament as one of its main substantive items.

Operative paragraph 2 reaffirms the point that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are substantively interrelated and mutually reinforcing. It makes abundantly clear that the two processes need to be linked, as nuclear non-proliferation cannot be effectively enforced without the corresponding systemic, progressive and irreversible process of nuclear disarmament. We cannot agree with the approach of some to emphasize aspects of non-proliferation without according equal importance to nuclear disarmament.

All Members of the United Nations, barring a few, are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and States parties have the obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Moreover, we attach great importance to the 13 steps for nuclear disarmament set out in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and we call on the nuclear-weapon States fully and effectively to implement those steps. Those points of great importance are reflected primarily in the operative parts of the draft resolution.

The views of the great majority of the States members of NAM are incorporated into a number of substantive paragraphs, such as in the reiteration of the call on the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament early in 2005. Additionally, the draft resolution calls upon the Conference to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament.

To emphasize the importance of reducing the nuclear danger in the present day, the draft resolution has undertaken to urge the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure pending their total elimination, to take further measures to reduce further the operational status of their nuclear-weapon systems, thus helping to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies. Such actions will further minimize the risk of nuclear weapons' ever being used.

Pending the desired objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the draft also calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to agree to an international, legally-binding instrument on a joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and, importantly, to conclude an internationally and legally binding instrument on security assurances of

non-use and non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. As a relevant operative paragraph shows, those essential interim measures will no doubt assist in reducing the nuclear danger.

Another important aspect of the draft is to demonstrate the integrity of the three pillars of the NPT regime — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy — and to stress the necessity of a positive and substantive outcome to the scheduled 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In essence, draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.26 remains the most substantive draft resolution on the subject of nuclear disarmament, emphasizing the essential role of multilateral endeavours to achieve nuclear disarmament. It once again encompasses the many concerns of the international community and expresses the need substantively and adequately to address and overcome the dangers posed by the existence of nuclear weapons among us.

Once again, my delegation calls upon delegations to demonstrate the will to lend overwhelming support to draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.26, as they have done in previous years, and to vote in its favour when the time comes to take action on it.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Japan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.23.

Mr. Mine (Japan): I would like to make a few introductory remarks about draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.23, which Japan has submitted to the First Committee and which is entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Japan has annually submitted a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament since 1994, reflecting relevant developments over the preceding year. The resolution has enjoyed a lot of support from the international community. Inspired by strong national sentiment in favour of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Japan has submitted the draft resolution again this year.

The draft resolution is based on our fundamental position, which places great importance on the realization of a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons through the steady application of a practical and incremental approach to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We try very hard each year to achieve a balance in our draft resolutions between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as between the evaluation of achievements and the requirements of future action. We look forward to its adoption with the support of many member States.

While I have the floor, I should like to ask for your permission, Sir, to respond to the remarks that were made yesterday by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Japan's position was clearly stated by our Prime Minister, Mr. Koizumi, at the general debate of the General Assembly:

> "The nuclear and missile issues on the Korean peninsula present a serious challenge to the peace and stability of north-east Asia and to the international community as a whole. Japan is determined to continue to seek a comprehensive resolution of the nuclear and missile issues and the abduction issue in line with the Pyongyang Declaration. The six-party talks must go forward. The benefit that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would receive by resolving those issues would be substantial. There is no benefit for it in continuing to pursue its nuclear programme." (*A/59/PV.4, p. 32*)

As the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has said in a statement published on 17 September in *Rodong Shimun*, one of its leading papers, Japan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must remain committed and sincerely implement the Pyongyang Declaration.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.22.

Ms. Borulla Bonnier (Sweden): I am speaking on behalf of the seven countries of the New Agenda Coalition: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Sweden. I do so to introduce our draft resolution entitled "Accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", contained in document A/C.1/59/L.22.

If seriously pursued, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. Both are vital to international peace and security and both are fundamental for upholding the

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone for both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

With only a few months remaining before the upcoming NPT Review Conference, and bearing in mind that the preparatory process was not able to produce substantive results, the situation looks rather bleak. We now need to generate and demonstrate strong support not only for non-proliferation, but also for nuclear disarmament. And it is absolutely crucial that we join together to safeguard and implement agreements already made and to move ahead.

One overall purpose of our draft resolution is to uphold and safeguard the NPT in its entirety, together with the commitments made at the previous two Review Conferences, including the agreed steps towards nuclear disarmament. Agreements need to be implemented or they risk falling apart, and implementation needs to be accelerated or confidence in the regime risks being undermined. Concern for the future of the regime lies behind the draft resolution's calls for full compliance with and implementation of commitments made. Moreover, our draft resolution goes beyond the NPT and addresses the entire United Nations membership.

It is also essential to utilize the remaining months before the NPT Review Conference to set in motion or accelerate the implementation of such steps where we deem action to be urgent and possible, even in this relatively short-term perspective.

Considering the overall state of affairs, we have this year opted for a short, focused and operative draft resolution, rather than for an omnibus. We have made an effort to be clear and to the point. In so doing we have also acted in the present reform spirit and we have largely relied on consensus language, much of it from the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

In conclusion, the New Agenda Coalition has made a very serious effort to arrive at a draft resolution that can generate broad support and bring the disarmament issues forward. We hope that other delegations will receive it in the same spirit and give it their support. We also welcome additional sponsors. The present situation calls for us to work together, to safeguard what we have achieved and to move forward.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of India to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/59/L.29 and A/C.1/59/L.30).

Mr. Prasad (India): I have the honour to introduce two draft resolutions at the same time: draft resolutions A/C.1/59/L.29 and A/C.1/59/L.30.

The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/59/L.29 is entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" and has been sponsored by 30 countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, the Sudan, Viet Nam, Zambia and India.

The draft resolution underlines that the use of nuclear weapons poses the most serious threat to the survival of mankind. It encapsulates the concerns expressed in the Kuala Lumpur summit of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), held in February last year, and the NAM ministerial meeting held in Durban in August this year.

As long as certain States claim an exclusive right to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity, and as long as the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is justified as a legitimate guarantor of security, the threat of use of nuclear weapons by States, and now by non-State actors, will remain.

The salience of nuclear weapons will diminish if States reorient their nuclear doctrines through a commitment to no first use and non-use of nuclear weapons, backed by a legally binding agreement to that effect. That should be more feasible now than in 1982, when this resolution was first presented, with the cold war having ended and the prevalence of non-adversarial relations among the major Powers.

In its historic advisory opinion of 1996, the International Court of Justice made international humanitarian law applicable to the use of nuclear weapons. The Court stated that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable to armed conflict. It also expressed the conviction that a multilateral agreement prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons would strengthen international security and create a climate for negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons, which seems to be our universal objective.

The international community evidently needs to take decisive steps to support a legally binding instrument prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as an interim measure until we reach agreement on a step-by-step process for elimination. That will serve to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in maintaining security, if not altogether to delegitimize nuclear weapons, and encapsulate the changes in doctrines, policies, attitudes and institutions required to usher in a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world.

The operative part of the draft resolution reiterates a simple call on the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations to reach agreement on an international convention on this subject. A positive vote for draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.29 would be a vote by the international community in favour of a decisive step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

I turn now to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/59/L.30, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger" and sponsored at present by 20 countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cuba, Fiji, Haiti, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, the Sudan, Viet Nam, Zambia and India.

The draft resolution underlines the need to hold an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers and calls for measures to protect humankind from the catastrophic consequences of the unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons that can result from prevailing security doctrines and nuclear postures.

The entire membership of the United Nations agreed by consensus in 1978 that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humankind and to the survival of civilization, and that effective measures of nuclear disarmament and prevention of nuclear war had the highest priority. Twenty-six years later, and more than a decade and a half after the end of the cold war, the concept of mutually assured destruction is universally judged to be anachronistic. The dictum that a nuclear war can never be won and must never be fought, enunciated by President Reagan before the General Assembly in 1983, is now accepted as conventional wisdom.

Pending nuclear disarmament, therefore, measures for reducing nuclear dangers are a *conditio sine qua non* for safeguarding humankind's collective security interests. The draft resolution refers to the seven recommendations of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters of 2001, which include preparing for a major international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger.

The unanimously adopted Millennium Declaration reiterated the commitment of the States Members of the United Nations to strive for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving that aim, including the possibility of convening the international conference that I referred to earlier. The draft resolution calls for building a consensus on holding that conference. It also offers modest and pragmatic proposals for the safety and security of humankind. It calls for a review of nuclear doctrines and immediate steps to reduce the risk of unintentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons.

The very real danger posed by the increased risk of systems and components falling into the hands of non-State actors has aggravated the current dangers. A positive vote for the draft resolution will be a reaffirmation by the international community of its readiness to take decisive steps towards reducing nuclear dangers.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): I would like to introduce to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.34, entitled "The Conference on Disarmament decision (CD/1547) of 11 August 1998 to establish, under item 1 of its agenda entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', an ad hoc committee to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

The draft resolution is identical to resolution 58/57 of 8 December 2003, adopted without a vote by this Committee and the General Assembly. It is anchored firmly in the expectations of the international community and reflects widespread support for beginning fissile material cut-off negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty which would

be fundamental to furthering both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

It remains our view that the existing mandate permits any Conference on Disarmament member to raise any issue or concern about the envisaged treaty during the course of negotiations. The text provides a vehicle for the First Committee to urge the Conference to immediately commence the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Canada, as custodian of the resolution, and our co-sponsors hope that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/59/L.8 and A/C.1/59/L.37.

Mrs. Elmarassy (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased, on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States, to submit a draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" and contained in document A/C.1/59/L.37.

The draft resolution reflects the concerns of the countries of the Middle East and of the international community as a whole over the continued existence of nuclear facilities in the region that are not under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and therefore heighten the danger of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. That danger has been stressed at the Review Conferences of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the most recent of which was held in 2000.

The draft resolution emphasizes the need for the relevant countries to make every effort to ensure the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and the accession of all countries of the region to the NPT and their adherence to all of its provisions. It also calls on Israel, the only State of the region that not yet become party to the NPT, to do so immediately and to place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. Furthermore, it requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

I also want to present the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/59/L.8, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", which Egypt has submitted for over 25 years and which enjoys widespread support.

The draft resolution also stresses the need for the relevant parties to adopt practical measures to ensure that the Middle East is free of nuclear weapons and to place all nuclear activities in the region under IAEA safeguards. It invites all countries of the region, pending the establishment of the nuclear-weapon-free zone, not to develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or permit their stationing on their territories.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of New Zealand to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.25.

Ms. McDonald (New Zealand): We have the honour to introduce, on behalf of Australia, Mexico and New Zealand, the draft resolution entitled "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty". The draft resolution calls once again for the signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to enable it to come into force. The draft resolution's document number is A/C.1/59/L.25.

There are a few points about the draft resolution that I would like to mention.

In the preamble to the draft resolution, we welcome the friends of the CTBT ministerial meeting, which was held last month during the General Assembly's general debate, and the statement that was issued by the ministers in support of the CTBT and its early entry into force.

We draw attention to operative paragraph 3, which underlines the need to maintain momentum towards completion of the verification regime. We recognize that only upon entry into force will the CTBT and its global verification regime be fully operational, but it continues to be a point of frustration that, in a world so bereft of effective verification provisions on weapons of mass destruction, that strong Treaty still has not entered into force.

Setting aside such frustrations, we believe that, during this set-up stage, the international monitoring system has real value in supporting global stability. That unprecedented network of monitoring stations, laboratories and the International Nuclear Data Centre in Vienna should, when completed, have the ability to detect nuclear explosions anywhere. It is important that we back our political support for the Treaty by

assisting where we can in the practical build-up of the international monitoring system.

Operative paragraph 8 is new. It requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the efforts of States parties towards universalization of the Treaty and possibilities for providing assistance on ratification procedures to States that request it. We have been encouraged by the substantial efforts of many countries to encourage ratifications in their own regions and beyond. We believe that such a report will provide more focus on where our universalization efforts could best be directed in the future, and that it will help to identify where assistance is available to those who may need it.

Throughout the text of the draft resolution, we have strengthened the calls on non-member States to join the CTBT. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, was extended indefinitely in 1995 largely on the basis of the renewed commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to completing the CTBT and pursuing the objectives of article VI. The fulfilment of that commitment is now long overdue.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Malaysia to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/59/L.39.

Mr. Rahman (Malaysia): My delegation is pleased to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", as contained in document A/C.1/59/L.39.

The draft resolution is sponsored by 45 countries. My delegation expresses its gratitude to all sponsors, as well as to those delegations that may decide to co-sponsor or support the draft resolution.

Developments in the field of nuclear disarmament over the past year can be described as rather disheartening. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General has observed that the

> "slow pace of disarmament, violations of non-proliferation commitments, evidence of a clandestine nuclear network and the threat of terrorism" (*A/59/1, para. 69*)

are some of the several challenges that, if left unchecked, could undermine international peace and security and increase the risk of new instances of unilateral or pre-emptive use of force.

My delegation and the sponsors of the draft resolution concur with him. It is crucial that favourable conditions be created for the further advancement of the global nuclear disarmament process. Large stocks of nuclear weapons remain in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States. Furthermore, nuclear-weapon States are continuing with plans to develop new nuclear weapons and for their possible use in future military conflicts.

The sponsors feel compelled to reiterate that the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament underscores that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is the ultimate goal of multilateral disarmament efforts. That goal is far from being achieved. States Members of the United Nations agreed at the special session that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humankind and to the survival of human civilization.

Today all States remain in full agreement with that conclusion, which was made almost three decades ago. In that connection, we call on member States to implement, in good faith and without further delay, the provisions of the draft resolution upon its adoption, in accordance with the resolve expressed by our leaders at the Millennium Summit, as well as with our treaty obligations to strive for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In submitting the draft resolution for the consideration of member States for the ninth consecutive year, my delegation and the sponsors are confident that it will continue to receive the support of a large majority of member States. We are confident that States that support multilateral negotiations will heed the views of the overwhelming majority inside and outside the Assembly and seek to join us in our collective endeavour towards the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

Once again, my delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the sponsors, as well as to the delegations that will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Cancheta (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation wishes to introduce the draft decision

contained in document A/C.1/59/L.15 and entitled "United Nations conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in the context of disarmament".

As a follow-up to the 2001 Millennium Declaration, the Mexican delegation submitted a draft resolution to this Committee whereby there would be convened, by 2006 at the latest, a United Nations conference to identify appropriate ways of eliminating nuclear dangers in the context of nuclear disarmament. In the current context, the need to convene such a conference is even clearer, among other vital reasons, in order to confront in a multilateral framework the dangers posed by the risk of non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. That is why the international community must move with greater resolve to find ways of countering that threat.

For that reason, my delegation has again decided, as it has in the past, to submit a draft decision that, by keeping the matter on the agenda of the First Committee, reaffirms the intention to continue find space for consultations that will allow us to reach agreement on the possible convening of the important conference.

Next year, there will be an assessment of compliance with the provisions of the Millennium Declaration. In that context, my delegation believes it is urgent that we redouble our efforts to make progress in implementing the agreements reached at the Summit — in other words,

> "to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers". (*resolution 55/2, para. 9*)

My delegation hopes that the draft decision contained in document A/C.1/59/L.15 will enjoy strong support from the delegations of the First Committee.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Nuclear weapons are a serious threat to international peace and security. Ever since 1946, the date of the adoption of the first resolution calling for nuclear disarmament, nuclear weapons, rather than being rejected and renounced, have continued to gain prominence in military doctrines and to accumulate in number, thereby exacerbating the threat of humankind's extinction.

The elimination of those fearsome devices is a binding legal obligation that must be met. Their abolition would strengthen international security, establish a climate of detente, free humankind from the threat of annihilation and release considerable financial resources to the economic and social development of all. It would also make it possible for us to join together in effectively addressing the new challenges and threats of terrorism, poverty, epidemics and global warming.

The nuclear-weapon States, which bear primary responsibility for that task, must take measures commensurate to that threat. Any such action must involve a global approach and requires total commitment to making progress in nuclear disarmament irreversible.

The delegation of Algeria wishes to express its support here for the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/59/L.26, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", which was introduced by the representative of Myanmar and which my delegation has co-sponsored since it was first introduced. We also reiterate our firm conviction that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is more than ever before the highest priority and that security is one and indivisible and must therefore benefit all.

It is therefore high time to establish a system of collective security that is independent of military theories and doctrines of deterrence that the cold war revealed to be outmoded. Today, nothing can justify ongoing reliance on obsolete doctrinal references that hinder the progress of the disarmament process.

The vast difficulties facing the nuclear disarmament process and the basic interest and important role accorded by security policies to nuclear weapons are dismaying because, first, they call into question the commitments undertaken in the area of nuclear disarmament and infringe upon the principle of the equal security for all; secondly, they give rise to the qualitative development and improvement of new types of weapons and create an atmosphere of distrust and further accelerate the arms race; thirdly, they attest to the erroneous interpretation and selective implementation of conventions and treaties; and fourthly, they encourage other countries to opt for nuclear weapons to ensure their own security in the

name of the doctrine of deterrence, which, unfortunately, remains with us today.

The unequivocal and historic commitment that was undertaken under article VI at the sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 2000 must be implemented immediately. We hope that the forthcoming NPT Review Conference will preserve those gains, find ways to ensure its full implementation and allow article VI to lead to the conclusion of other international agreements that would assist in the full dismantling of nuclear weapons based on the restoration of a multilateral framework. It should also relaunch the Disarmament Commission, the sole multilateral disarmament body, and break the deadlock in that body so that it can begin in good faith and without delay, negotiations to ensure the elimination of those especially lethal weapons as a priority task.

Nuclear disarmament must not be limited to countering horizontal nuclear proliferation. Horizontal nuclear non-proliferation would be insufficient to building international peace and security without real and effective nuclear disarmament. The vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, which runs counter to the spirit and letter of the NPT, has not been pursued and nuclear arsenals still exist. And yet, the world today has little room for weaponry and requires solidarity and cooperation.

The draft resolution on nuclear disarmament before us advocates nuclear disarmament. It is based on the clear and bold perception of nuclear weapons that the international community expressed through its resolutions on disarmament in 1946. It calls for the effective implementation of the 13 steps endorsed at the sixth NPT Review Conference, in particular the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States to proceeding to the total elimination of their arsenals. The draft resolution recognizes that the conditions now exist to create a world free from nuclear weapons and reflects the belief that it is genuinely necessary to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in security policies so as to facilitate their elimination. The draft resolution proposes a series of relevant and practical measures to chart the way towards the implementation of our objective of eliminating nuclear weapons.

My delegation believes that the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament, the establishment in 2005 of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, the opening of negotiations to draft a fissile material cut-off treaty, and the conclusion, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, of a legal and binding instrument on security guarantees are all conducive measures for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation reaffirms, through its support for the draft resolution, its resolute dedication to the elimination of nuclear weapons, the sole reliable approach for future generations. We are similarly pleased to affirm my delegation's full support for the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/59/L.39 on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which was introduced by the representative of Malaysia and which my country has co-sponsored ever since its first submission to the First Committee. It emphasizes the Court's unanimous conclusion that the there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control, and urgently calls on all States immediately to fulfil that obligation.

My delegation asks for the full support of all delegations for the two draft resolutions.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Uzbekistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.7.

Mr. Kayumov (Uzbekistan): On behalf of the five Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, I would like to introduce the draft decision on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, contained in document A/C.1/59/L.7.

Several General Assembly resolutions and decisions have been adopted on that subject since the inception of the initiative. In adopting those documents by consensus, the international community has indicated its unequivocal support for that proposal. We thank the delegations that voiced their support for the establishment of a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone during the general debate.

For almost seven years since the adoption of the first General Assembly resolution on that issue, the States of the region have been able to work out a draft treaty on the establishment of the zone and a protocol of negative security assurances by nuclear-weapon

States. For the time being, the States of the region are in the midst of consultations with nuclear-weapon States on those drafts. We very much hope that the Central Asian and nuclear-weapon States will find an appropriate compromise that will make the creation of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone a possibility.

On behalf of our five countries, allow me to express our sincere hope that the draft resolution will find the support of all delegations and be adopted by consensus.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Chile to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.50.

Mr. Winter (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is my honour, on behalf of 113 sponsors, to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.50, entitled "Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation".

The draft resolution is brief and general in nature. Its simple objective is to welcome the Hague Code of Conduct, which currently has 117 signatories. As is widely known, the Hague Code of Conduct is an instrument that serves as a political reference point. It is not legally binding and its essential intent is to implement measures of transparency and confidence-building regarding programmes, policies and the launching of ballistic missiles and means of space delivery.

In its preambular part, the draft expresses the General Assembly's concern about the regional and global security challenges caused, inter alia, by the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. It confirms the General Assembly's commitment to the Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries, as contained in the annex to its resolution 51/122 of 13 December 1996. It also recognizes that States should not be excluded from utilizing the benefits of space for peaceful purposes, but that, in reaping such benefits and in conducting related cooperation, they must not contribute to the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction.

Mindful of all that, the General Assembly would, by the draft, welcome the adoption of the Hague Code of Conduct and invite all States that have not yet subscribed to the Code to do so. It would also encourage the exploration of further ways and means to deal effectively with the problem of the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction.

Given the aforementioned aspects of the draft resolution, we hope that it can be adopted without a vote and, given the number of sponsors – 113 as of now – that it can be channelled through to adoption as soon as possible.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.44.

Mr. Umer (Pakistan): It is my great pleasure to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/59/L.44, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". I make this introduction on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, El Salvador, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam, Zambia and my own delegation.

The provision of security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States is an obligation that arises from the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter obliges Member States not to use or threaten the use of force. That obligation extends to the non-use of and non-threat of use of any weapons, including nuclear weapons. Indeed, that fact was underlined by the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its first session, which outlawed nuclear weapons.

The demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s and it crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The response of the nuclear-weapon States, reflected in Security Council resolution 255 (1968) was considered to be inadequate by the non-nuclear-weapon States. At the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, an agreement was reached for the conclusion of an international instrument that would be provide binding and credible negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. However, the declarations made by four of the five nuclear-weapon States at the

special session and later at the NPT Extension Conference, and reflected in Security Council resolution 984 (1995), were also considered insufficient, qualified and partial by most non-nuclear-weapon States.

At the end of cold war, there was a general expectation that it would become easier to extend negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. Unfortunately, the situation, instead of becoming easier, has become more complex, for several reasons.

First, with the indefinite extension of the NPT, most nuclear-weapon States have presumed the permanent right to retain nuclear weapons. Secondly, the commitment to complete nuclear disarmament in article VI of the NPT has remained open-ended even after the undertakings, which were widely welcomed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, the geographical scope for the use of nuclear weapons has also expanded with the expansion of nuclear alliances and the operationalization of provisions for sharing nuclear weapons and command and control among alliance members. Briefly, new doctrines, including the possible use of nuclear weapons that are contrary to resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) of the Security Council, have been propounded. And finally, two additional nuclear weapon States have emerged on the world scene.

Under those circumstances, the conclusion of credible negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States has gained greater urgency. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.44 seek to underline and to operationalize this sense of urgency. This draft resolution is similar to texts adopted at previous sessions by this Committee. Its contents are self-evident, obviating the need for me to review its various provisions. For the above reasons, the sponsors believe that the conclusion of effective arrangements on negative security assurances could constitute a major confidence-building measure in the current tense international situation between the nuclear and the non-nuclear-weapon States.

Secondly, the draft resolution could contribute to reducing nuclear dangers; it could also alleviate the threats which arise from new doctrines of nuclear use and would facilitate negotiations for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It is therefore the hope of the sponsors that this draft resolution will be adopted with the widest possible support.

Mr. Rahman (Malaysia): I have the honour to table on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) its first draft resolution in the Committee entitled, "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol", as contained in document A/C.1/59/L.12, dated 19 October 2004. We propose to table this draft resolution under agenda item 65 (d) of the same name. As the Committee would recall, a resolution on this question was adopted by consensus two years ago at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

I should like to begin by reaffirming and reiterating the commitment of the NAM to promoting international peace and security through disarmament measures. Our position on disarmament and international security issues are reflected clearly in the decisions made at the thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of NAM, held in Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 25 February 2003. This position was reiterated most recently at the Fourteenth Ministerial Conference of NAM in Durban from 17 to 19 August 2004. NAM would also like to strongly reaffirm its view that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations provide the only sustainable way to address disarmament and international security issues.

The draft resolution entitled, "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol", inter alia, recalls the longstanding determination of the international community to ban chemical and biological weapons. It welcomes the initiative taken by three or more States parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol in withdrawing their reservations, as contained in document A/59/179. It also renews the previous call by the General Assembly for all States to strictly observe the principles, objectives and prohibitions of that Protocol and calls on those States that continue to maintain their reservations to the Protocol to withdraw them. We trust that this draft resolution will be adopted with the widest possible support as in the previous sessions of the General Assembly.

Finally, may I state that the NAM believes in the vital importance of multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in addressing disarmament and international security issues. The draft resolution that the NAM has just introduced is submitted for the

consideration of this Committee in that spirit. We are confident that, in that same spirit, it will continue to receive the support of Member States. We are certain that its adoption and implementation will facilitate efforts currently underway by the international community to ban chemical and biological weapons, thereby contributing to a much safer and more peaceful world.

At this juncture, on behalf of the members of the NAM, may I express our sincere appreciation to the delegations that support our draft resolution. We welcome comments to improve the text, as well as additional sponsorship of the draft resolution. I should also like to inform the Committee that my delegation will be tabling six more NAM-sponsored draft resolutions in the course of this week.

Mr. Baldinejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have taken the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.6 entitled, "Missiles". In addition to my country, Egypt and Indonesia are also sponsors of the draft resolution.

Since the introduction of this item on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1999, increasing support has been given to addressing the issue of missiles in all its aspects in the United Nations. The Panel of Governmental Experts on the Issue of Missiles in All its Aspects was able to submit its report — the first of its kind in the history of the United Nations — in which it addressed the issue of missiles in all its aspects. The success of the first Panel opened prospects for exploring further ways and means of dealing with that issue within the United Nations. Unfortunately, the second Panel of Governmental Experts was not similarly successful. The Secretary-General, in paragraph 5 of his report to the General Assembly (A/59/278), stated that, "given the complexity of the issues at hand, no consensus was reached on the preparation of a final report".

As we have stated before, such a situation prompts us to work more seriously and with dedication and better preparation, to address this highly important issue in the future. We should acknowledge that our work in this regard is in the initial stages of a longer process and will yield fruit if we approach the issue in a spirit of good faith and with focused attention. To that end, it is imperative to redouble our efforts to advance the issue of missiles within the framework of the United Nations for the sake of a safer and better future.

The draft resolution this year concentrates on planning our future steps to address missiles within the forum of the United Nations. The draft resolution, in its operative paragraph 3, suggests the establishment of a third Panel of Governmental Experts in 2007-2008 with a more specific mandate of exploring further ways and means to address within the United Nations the issue of missiles in all its aspects, including identifying areas where consensus can be reached. This mandate, in contrast with the mandates of previous Panels, which were general in nature, has been narrowed down for the purpose of enabling the Governmental experts to be more specific and focused in their discussions. The time frame of two years is intended to provide more time to the experts to enable them to have thorough and sufficient discussions. In the meantime, operative paragraph 2 of the draft suggests that a study should be made by the Secretary-General in 2006, with the support of qualified consultants and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. The report would concentrate on identifying areas in which consensus could be reached. We believe that the United Nations study would constitute an important and in-depth analysis of the issue and, without committing States with regard to its findings, could be helpful to Member States and particularly to the third Panel of Governmental Experts as useful input.

As before, we expect that good support will be given to this draft resolution.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We have thus concluded the introduction of draft resolutions under cluster 1, nuclear disarmament.

If there is no other request for the floor, we shall now proceed to consider segment 2 of the agenda, which includes two clusters: other weapons of mass destruction and the militarization of outer space. It is my intention to divide the statements so that we will follow a logic in the development of the discussion. In that connection, I shall first offer the floor to delegations that wish to speak on the subject of other weapons of mass destruction. When we have completed the corresponding list, I shall give the floor to delegations wishing to refer to the subject of outer space.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): With regard to what you have just said, Mr. Chairman, I will make two statements on behalf of the European Union — the first on other weapons of mass destruction and the second on outer space. I understand that you wish me to make those statements separately and to wait to speak on outer space until we consider that cluster. I will comply with your request, although my original feeling was that, in the interests of efficiency, I might deliver both statements together. But you are our boss, so I will obey your orders. Right now, I will speak on other weapons of mass destruction.

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement regarding the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the issue of ballistic missiles, including the Hague Code of Conduct against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles.

The EU is of the opinion that the CWC is a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument whose strict application must be fully guaranteed. The BTWC is the cornerstone of our efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from being developed as weapons. The EU supports and promotes wholeheartedly the universal adherence to and implementation of the objectives laid down in those treaties. We are equally supportive of the organization that is facilitating the implementation of and ensuring compliance with the CWC — the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague.

In strong support of the goal of universality, the EU has carried out, within the framework of its common position, démarches to most States not party to those treaties, and we welcome those States — including some of our close neighbours — that have recently become parties to the CWC and the BTWC. The threat of the possible use of chemical and biological weapons by non-State actors has become real. Those treaties, if universally adopted and fully implemented and complied with, can play an important role in countering that threat. The EU will therefore continue to stress the importance of those treaties in its relations with third countries.

In the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, adopted in December 2003, we identified a number of concrete actions in support of promoting and reinforcing the CWC and the BTWC. The EU is now in the process of implementing the Strategy, and I would like to mention a few concrete actions taken so far.

The EU is finalizing a joint action with the OPCW that would allow for the provision of financial support to OPCW programmes in the area of universality, national implementation and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities. The EU will also consider, within the framework of its cooperative threat-reduction efforts, providing support to OPCW States facing administrative or financial difficulties in their implementation of the CWC.

The Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction underlines the importance of the challenge inspection mechanism in the context of the CWC. The EU is promoting the instrument of challenge inspections within the framework of the CWC and beyond. A few months ago, Austria organized and hosted an EU seminar on challenge inspections that concluded in an EU action plan on that subject, which will further raise overall awareness of the procedural and practical issues surrounding challenge inspections. The EU believes that the OPCW Technical Secretariat must be well prepared and equipped to conduct a challenge inspection. That issue is now addressed in the competent bodies of the CWC as well as in the context of political dialogue with third States.

In our Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the EU has indicated that it will take the lead in efforts to strengthen regulations on the trade in material that can be used for the production of biological weapons. The EU will also take the lead in supporting national implementation of the BTWC — for example, in providing technical assistance. As a follow-up to last year's Meeting of States Parties, the EU will consider giving support to States experiencing administrative or financial difficulties in their national implementation of the BTWC. The EU is considering setting up a roster of legal experts similar to the one set up by the OPCW for

the CWC to assist countries in the drafting of legislation.

Since the BTWC does not at present contain a verification mechanism, the EU will try to find ways to strengthen compliance with the Convention. In that context, we fully support the intersessional programme of work for the years 2003-2005 in Geneva. However, the EU remains committed to developing measures to verify compliance with the BTWC, and we believe it would be an appropriate subject for consideration by the Review Conference with a view to identifying further action. The EU would also welcome further discussion on the proposal to review and update the existing mechanism under the Secretary-General for investigating cases of the alleged use of biological weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease — which was established on the basis of General Assembly resolution 42/37C of 1987 and endorsed by the Assembly in 1990 in its resolution 45/57 — in order to render that mechanism more operational.

In the view of the EU, the two topics under consideration at this year's meetings in the context of the BTWC are important elements for the strengthening of the Convention. The EU would like to express its satisfaction with the comprehensive exchange of information that took place at the Meeting of Experts, held in July this year. At that Meeting, EU member States made clear their support of the existing verification mechanisms and systems, including existing mechanisms for the investigation of alleged use. At the Meeting, EU member States also made clear their support for the work of the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health and the Food and Agricultural Organization aimed at preventing and monitoring outbreaks of diseases. The EU already works together closely with those organizations on an number of issues and we intend to intensify our cooperation in the future. The EU strongly favours a substantive outcome of the forthcoming Meeting of States Parties.

In addressing the problem of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation has, since its adoption in 2002, become an important element of the global non-proliferation regime. There are 115 countries that have subscribed to the Code, and more countries are seriously considering taking that step soon.

The EU supports the Hague Code of Conduct, the only normative instrument in the field of ballistic missile proliferation. We remain deeply convinced that the Code of Conduct constitutes the most concrete initiative in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and offers the best chance of producing tangible results in the short term. This includes the right of every State to reap the benefits of the peaceful use of outer space.

The Hague Code of Conduct is an initial, though essential, step to effectively address the problem of missile proliferation from a multilateral global perspective, without precluding other initiatives or, in the longer term, more comprehensive approaches.

For the first time in this Committee, support is being sought for submitting a draft resolution on the subject of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and our colleague from Chile just spoke on that issue before the start of discussions on this cluster.

That draft resolution would introduce the Hague Code of Conduct in a transparent way into the wider framework of the United Nations. The EU is committed to promoting a closer relationship between the Code and the United Nations system.

In line with the aforementioned, as well as the EU's global and multilateral approach when dealing with non-proliferation issues, the EU will fully support this draft resolution, and all EU member States will sponsor it. We call upon all other delegations to do likewise.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands for the flexibility he has shown in agreeing to divide up his intervention on behalf of the European Union. He will be the first speaker in the second segment, devoted to outer space.

Mr. Lew Kwang-chul (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the representative of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for his detailed briefing on the achievements made in the field of chemical weapons and on the tasks that lie ahead for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The political declaration that was agreed by consensus at the First Review Conference of the CWC reaffirmed the basis of the chemical weapons ban, as embodied in the Convention's provisions. We are pleased to note that significant progress has been made in the two action plans adopted at the Review Conference. One plan deals with national implementation of the Convention; the

other deals with its universality. Without universal adherence to the Convention, the ultimate goal of a chemical-weapons-free world cannot be achieved.

My delegation welcomes the accession to the Convention of six additional countries since last year, including Libya, and we call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention without further delay.

My delegation wishes to lend its full support to this year's draft resolution (A/C.1/59/L.16), which bolsters the three pillars of the Convention and reflects progress made since the First Review Conference on universalization, full and effective implementation and technical cooperation. Furthermore, universality is necessary to cope with the increasing threat of terrorism through the use of chemical weapons and other risks associated with the proliferation of dangerous chemical materials. In that regard, we appreciate the continuous contribution of the OPCW to the work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee and welcome its readiness to further contribute by providing technical assistance and advice within the context of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This year's Meeting of Experts on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) offered a valuable opportunity for useful discussions on two important topical subjects, the first on enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of the alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease, the second on strengthening and broadening national and international institutional efforts and existing mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases affecting humans, animals and plants.

We look forward to the continuation of successful experts' meetings and annual meetings, pending the Sixth Review Conference in 2006. The lack of verification protocols should not serve as justification for any State party to the BWC to fail to equip itself with effective measures at the national level. It is necessary to take adequate steps to translate the prohibitions of the BWC into action through all legislative, administrative and regulatory means.

Multilateral arms control and non-proliferation agreements should not remain static; rather, they should grow increasingly stronger and more efficient in the fight against new and emerging threats. In order for the BWC to become a viable and resilient mechanism, the assessment of the developments affecting its objectives and operations must be evaluated periodically. In that regard, we recognize the increasing need to address the ever expanding threat posed by biological weapons in the current international security environment.

Mr. Costea (Romania): Romania aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (EU), just delivered by Ambassador Chris Sanders of the Netherlands. While fully sharing the EU's policy, objectives and démarches in this area, we would like to briefly highlight our national contribution with respect to their fulfilment.

The so-called other weapons of mass destruction, namely, chemical and biological weapons, continue to pose threats to international security and stability, in spite of the multilateral agreements prohibiting the production and use of such weapons.

This is not because the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) or the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) have failed at their ultimate purposes. As we heard at the 4th meeting of this Committee, held two weeks ago, from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW),

> "the OPCW is moving decisively from being a new organization still in the early stages of fulfilling its mandate to being a mature one with a solid and widely recognized record of achievement and the increasing support of the international community".

Romania attaches particular importance to OPCW activity and continues to contribute to the promotion of its core objectives, mainly CWC universalization and national implementation. In this last instance, our country hosted the third meeting of National Authorities of the Eastern European States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention from 17 to 19 May 2004. Representatives of 25 national authorities from all regions of the world, as well as from international organizations such as the World Customs Organization and the European Chemical Industry Council, discussed the practical actions needed to fulfil the objectives of the OPCW article VII action plan on enhancing the effectiveness of the CWC's national implementation measures.

The status of the Convention's implementation in Eastern Europe was reviewed, focusing on the

requirements for legislative and administrative provisions to monitor and to declare scheduled chemicals. Participants shared their experience in this topical area, further strengthening the cooperative network established to provide implementation support to individual States parties.

In that context, the United States of America and Romania launched an assistance programme for the implementation of the Convention. It involves software to be made available to all national authorities in need of legal and practical support in the process of implementing CWC provisions.

With regard to the BWC, Romania shares the conviction that the programme of work for the period 2003-2005 will significantly strengthen the BWC. The new format facilitates the exchange of views, experience and best practices at the expert level and may result in common understanding and concrete recommendations, which is the necessary input for the 2006 Review Conference. Romanian authorities will continue to actively follow up that new process with a view to improving the national legislation and the mechanisms necessary for implementation of the BWC. An ad hoc interministerial group was established in my country to coordinate internal BWC-related activities.

In today's environment, overshadowed by incidents such as the 2001 anthrax letters, not only has the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction become an imminent threat but also, more specifically, terrorists' access to and use of chemical and biological weapons have proven to be a frightening possibility.

Against that background, Romania welcomes the suitable responses of the international community, such as through Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and we hope that we will soon witness its concrete results in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors.

We are looking forward to the decisions and measures that the First Committee will adopt in order to further strengthen norms against the proliferation and the use of chemical and biological weapons, with particular focus on terrorists and terror groups.

Mr. Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am taking the floor on behalf of the expanded Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR). The countries of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the associated countries Bolivia, Chile and Peru reaffirm our commitment to the disarmament and non-proliferation objectives of Chemical Weapons Convention. We support the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to achieve universalization of the Convention and full compliance with its provisions. We also express our satisfaction at the recent accession of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the Convention. It should be recalled that, in its paragraph 8, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) calls upon all States

> "To promote the universal adoption and full implementation, and, where necessary, strengthening of multilateral treaties to which they are parties, whose aim is to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons".

We reiterate our call for the ongoing improvement of the mechanism for verification, and we urge States parties to continue to contribute financial, technical and human resources to attain that objective.

Although there has been a reduction in chemical arsenals, we reiterate our appeal to possessor countries to destroy them as soon as possible. Any delay in destruction affects the important work being done in the area of the Convention.

Likewise, we must continue to enhance the mechanisms for strengthening international cooperation to ensure that developing countries can create and implement national measures to meet their commitments under the Convention without negatively affecting the development of an autonomous chemical industry.

At the regional level, the members of MERCOSUR and Bolivia, Chile and Peru consider that the Convention is a sufficient tool to fight the proliferation of chemical weapons. It is necessary to redouble efforts to achieve greater cooperation in border and customs controls. In that context, there was a technical meeting of national customs authorities from 6 to 8 September, in Buenos Aires, on practical aspects of transfer regulations in connection with implementation of the Convention. It was attended by representatives of 44 States parties, international organizations and the chemical industry, with a view to discussing the problems involved in customs controls and the import and export of chemical substances. That

type of meeting demonstrates the great commitment of the authorities of the organization's member States to implement the Convention's objectives.

Mr. Al-Shafi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor, I am pleased to join preceding speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to chair the First Committee. I wish you every success in your work.

In previous resolutions, in particular resolution 58/34, the General Assembly urged all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking the practical measures required for the implementation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East. While awaiting the establishment of that zone, the countries of the region should solemnly declare that they will refrain from producing or acquiring or possessing nuclear weapons or explosives, not place their nuclear weapons on the territory of third parties, ensure their compliance with the guidelines of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), declare their support for establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and deposit such declarations with the Security Council for consideration.

In paragraphs 10 and 11 of resolution 58/34, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to pursue consultations with the States of the region and other concerned States in order to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and requested him to submit a report on that subject at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The delegation of Qatar insists that the States of the region must comply with the basic provisions of that resolution and other relevant resolutions. We welcome initiatives for general and complete disarmament, including in the Middle East, in particular initiatives to declare the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Given Qatar's commitment to international agreements, we have undertaken to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), adopted on 10 September 1996. Qatar continues to reaffirm in international forums its sincere wish to see the Middle East made a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

We recall the address of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar to the General Assembly at the current session, on 21 September. He stressed the need to make the Middle East, without exception, a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in order to ensure the security, stability and prosperity of all countries of the region.

Qatar considers that other States of the region that are parties to disarmament treaties and agreements must abide by their commitment to strengthen international peace and security, consolidate stability and democracy and improve relations among the States of the region. This, however, can be done only if Israel accedes to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), submits all its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and abides by Security Council resolution 487 (1981). That resolution explicitly demands that Israel immediately place its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the safeguards regime of the IAEA. We encourage Member States to exert pressure on Israel to abide by the wishes of the international community and to implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Israel is the sole State in the Middle East which has not yet signed the NPT and which has not yet submitted its nuclear facilities to international verification and control. This is contributing to insecurity in the region, which is continually threatened by those lethal weapons.

Last but not least, Qatar considers that accession by States to disarmament treaties and conventions and the commitment to abide by them can guarantee regional and international peace and security. Qatar welcomes all initiatives aimed at achieving general and complete disarmament, particularly in the Middle East. We insist that the Middle East be a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. We also insist on the importance of the role of the United Nations to that end.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): If there are no other delegations wishing to take the floor on the subject of other weapons of mass destruction, I shall now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands to speak on the subject of outer space.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and as well as the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The EU is conscious of the growing involvement of the international community in outer space activities for development and progress, and is actively cooperating in various space initiatives. Such activities should be developed in a peaceful environment. An arms race in outer space should be prevented.

Since it is our belief that the Conference on Disarmament is the only international multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament, it is within the Conference on Disarmament that any decision should be taken regarding work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The EU supports the establishment of a subsidiary body at the Conference on Disarmament to deal with this matter on the basis of a mandate which will be the subject of an agreement by all.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to make a thematic statement on outer space. The peaceful use of outer space is in the interests of all peoples of the world. Undertakings in such areas as communication, navigation, meteorology, remote sensing, culture and disaster reduction have come to be inextricably linked with the peaceful use of outer space.

However, as nuclear materials can be used both as a clean and efficient energy source and for making nuclear weapons, outer space both benefits all countries and, at the same time, remains a potential source of fresh military confrontations and threats. With the rapid development of outer space technology, outer space, once deemed a far frontier, has been increasingly viewed in terms of its military value. Belligerent theories and concepts such as the control of outer space, power projection into and through outer space and research and development of outer space weapons have found their way into implementation. It is no exaggeration to say that outer space could become the fourth battleground, after land, sea and air, if we sit on our hands watching these developments unfold.

The deployment of weapons in outer space would result in a series of grave repercussions, destroying strategic balances of power and stability, undermining international and national security, damaging existing arms control treaties, particularly agreements related to nuclear weapons and missiles, and triggering an arms race.

In addition, the deployment and use of weapons in outer space would seriously threaten the security of outer space assets and bring harm to the earth's biosphere. The testing of outer space weapons in low orbits around earth would aggravate the already acute problem of space debris.

Facing the risk of the weaponization of — and an arms race in — outer space, the existing international legal regime related to outer space has revealed its limitations. It fails to prevent and prohibit the deployment and use of weapons other than those of mass destruction in outer space and the use or threat of use of force from the earth's surface against outer space objects.

Over the years, the international community has endeavoured on many fronts to prevent the weaponization of — and an arms race in — outer space. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva set up an ad hoc committee for 10 consecutive years, from 1985 to 1994, to discuss the issues involved. The General Assembly has, for many years and without interruption, overwhelmingly adopted, without any negative vote, resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The Secretary-General and many other people of insight have repeated their calls for attention to this issue. Canada, Sri Lanka, France, Sweden, Italy and many other countries have also come up with their own constructive proposals.

In 2002, the delegations of China and the Russian Federation, along with the delegations of Viet Nam, Indonesia, Belarus, Zimbabwe and the Syrian Arab Republic, based in Geneva, submitted in the Conference on Disarmament a working paper entitled "Possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects" (CD/1679). It is our hope that the Conference on Disarmament can use this document as a basis for negotiating and concluding a new outer space legal instrument.

This document prohibits the following basic actions: placing in orbit around the earth any object carrying any kind of weapons; installing such weapons

on celestial bodies; stationing such weapons in outer space in any other manner; resorting to the threat or use of force against outer space objects; and encouraging other States, groups of States or international organizations to participate in activities prohibited by this proposed treaty.

This working document is still evolving and improving. All interested parties have put forward pertinent suggestions and proposals related to the document. In that regard, following an in-depth study, the delegations of China and the Russian Federation distributed in the Conference on Disarmament last August two non-papers entitled "Existing international legal instruments and the prevention of the weaponization of outer space" and "Verification aspects of PAROS".

All parties are welcome to join the discussions on those issues so that we can put the future substantive work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space on a better footing. It is the hope of the Chinese delegation that, as stipulated in operative paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 58/36, the Conference on Disarmament will assume, as soon as possible, "the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects".

Peace, development and cooperation represent a trend of our times. The early conclusion of an international legal instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space would be conducive to maintaining the peaceful use of outer space, facilitating related international cooperation and promoting common security for all countries. Let us undertake concerted efforts to preserve the vast reaches of outer space as a tranquil place for the benefit of future generations.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation considers preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space — and thereby preventing an arms in outer space — to be one of the most important and urgent tasks facing the international community. Russia has traditionally been a sponsor of the draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and we shall do so at this session as well.

The significance of outer space in the life of mankind and in ensuring our further progress is rapidly growing. We are coming to depend increasingly on space technology. Here and now, it is easy to imagine the kinds of dramatic consequences for daily life that would result from violation of the norms governing space activity, let alone from hostilities in outer space.

Objectively speaking, the exploration of outer space is one of the most important means for resolving the global problems of mankind, including those related to energy, information, the wise use of natural resources, protection of the environment and fighting the consequences of natural disasters. On the other hand, if the situation were to develop unfavourably, outer space could become a new arena for military confrontation and a source of new threats to everyone. The appearance of weapons in outer space would give rise to a host of the most serious kinds of complications and dangers, ranging from the undermining of international security and stability to the worsening of the problem of space debris.

Such negative scenarios must and can be avoided. Outer space must remain a sphere for cooperation, not confrontation. Strike weapons have not yet been deployed in outer space, and no decision has been taken to that end. In the light of that reality, we have a real opportunity to prevent the transformation of outer space into a theatre of military confrontation. Preventing the weaponization of outer space would be easier than conducting negotiations on space disarmament.

Of course, we do not choose to create space weapons. We should like once again to emphasize that, as of now and for the near future, the Russian Federation has no plans to create and deploy any kind of space weapon system in outer space. In addition, Russia has consistently complied with the moratorium on antisatellite system tests.

Existing international outer space law — particularly with regard to the prevention of an arms race in outer space — contains obvious gaps. There is clearly a need for its further improvement. A partial filling of those gaps was called for at the Conference on Disarmament in the working paper contained in document CD/1679. It includes a proposal, presented by Russia and China and sponsored also by a group of other States, on the elaboration of a treaty on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects. That proposal is being further developed; we

welcome the constructive discussions that are taking place in Geneva in that regard. The working paper by Russia and China on possible elements for such a treaty, recently prepared and distributed at the Conference on Disarmament, will undoubtedly serve as a good stimulus for further intensive discussions. We believe that the Conference is the ideal forum for elaborating a new legally binding international instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space.

The Conference on Disarmament has had many years of experience in working on various aspects of the problem of preventing an arms race in outer space. The Russian-Chinese proposal to which I just referred is our contribution to the future work of the Conference's Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which we hope will be re-established in connection with the adoption of a balanced programme of work for the Conference. Russia and China agree that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space should have a research mandate, not a negotiating mandate. That would be a major contribution of our States to the achievement of a compromise at the Conference on Disarmament, which would allow us to resume its substantive work after a break of many years.

At the same time, we cannot sit idly by until such time as new multilateral international legal treaties have been elaborated to prevent the weaponization of outer space. In that connection, Russia has put forward a whole range of important initiatives.

At the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Russian Federation submitted a proposal on the introduction of a moratorium on deploying weapons in outer space, pending the conclusion of the relevant international agreements. In so doing, we also expressed our readiness to undertake that commitment immediately if other space Powers would associate themselves with such a moratorium. In that connection, Russia has taken the initiative and has implemented serious measures of openness and confidence-building in outer space activity such as providing information concerning forthcoming launches of space objects, their purposes and the basic parameters of their orbits.

The Russian Federation has introduced a new, important and far-ranging initiative during the present session of the General Assembly. We have stated, for the first time, that we will not be the first to deploy weapons of any kind in outer space. That is a serious step, and it demonstrates our sense of responsibility. We call upon all States that have space potential to follow our example. Similar unilateral political statements by major actors in the space field that they would not be the first to deploy weapons in outer space could substantively enhance mutual confidence, strengthen motivations to prevent an arms race in outer space and create an essential safety net while research and negotiations are being carried out on a new international legal instrument to prevent the deployment of weapons in outer space. We are convinced that all States, without exception, would stand to gain from that. Moreover, we hope that that initiative, aimed at providing unique, voluntary and intersecting guarantees of security in space, will become the subject of intensive study in capitals, in the United Nations and in other international forums. We would also like to pay due tribute to the interesting and promising proposals and plans concerning prevention of an arms race in outer space put forward by France, Canada and other States at the Conference on Disarmament and other forums. In our view, much of that groundwork continues to be of practical value. We also would like to note the significant contributions made by a number of eminent non-governmental organizations towards identifying themes related to preventing an arms race in outer space.

Growing worldwide awareness of the dangers of deploying of weapons in outer space and a greater understanding of the urgency of taking practical steps to prevent that twenty-first century threat are, once again, making it necessary to adopt a General Assembly resolution on preventing an arms race in outer space. We call on all delegations to support draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.36 on that item.

Mr. Paral (Canada): Canada remains profoundly opposed to the weaponization of space. We want space to be considered as a universal good. Canada's Prime Minister, Paul Martin, expanded upon that concept in his statement to the General Assembly last month, when he said,

> "Space is our final frontier. It has always captured our imagination. What a tragedy it would be if space became one big weapons arsenal and the scene of a new arms race. In 1967, the United Nations agreed that weapons of mass destruction must not be based in space. The time has come to extend that ban to all weapons." (*A/59/PV.5, p. 32*)

We are committed to seeing the Conference on Disarmament re-establish an ad hoc committee to discuss the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects and to seeing the Conference eventually undertake the negotiation of a space weapons ban. With a view to realizing such a ban, the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space would also respond to the call of General Assembly resolution 58/36 and its predecessors.

In that regard, Canada supports draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.36 submitted by Egypt and Sri Lanka. We call on all member nations to support this initiative — and not just rhetorically, but in the most practical terms. The Conference must get back to productive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as well as on other matters.

As has been suggested in the Conference on Disarmament, one way to help start this process pending the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee might be for the Conference to establish an experts group to explore some of the more technical aspects of space security issues. Canada would also call for the establishment of crosswalks between the space-related work of the First and Fourth Committees of the General Assembly. Likewise, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament must work together more closely on this issue.

Exchange of information is essential to address that increasingly critical area of multilateral interest. In March of this year, Canada co-sponsored a workshop on space security with the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, on the margins of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. A clear message from the workshop was that there is a need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to ensuring space security.

Canada encourages creative thinking and action with regard to confidence-building measures that could help ensure space security and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We were pleased to hear Russia's recent pledge, made here in the First Committee on 5 October and again today, that it would not be the first to deploy any kind of weapon in outer space, and its appeal to all countries with space-faring potential to follow suit. Such declarations of no first deployment of space-based weapons represent a good interim measure. If adopted widely, they could help build confidence that no nation will station weapons in space, and could lead us closer to our objective of an eventual ban.

Canada's goal is to support the continued access to and use of space by all nations for peaceful purposes. Space and the benefits it provides across a wide range of sectors represent an increasingly valuable resource that must be protected. This international good is simply too precious to leave unprotected by multilateral action.

With the approaching fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, we might also consider how we can work together to encourage States that have not ratified that "Magna Carta of space" to do so before 2007.

On a related matter, I think that it is important to acknowledge the fact that the First Committee now has before it, for the first time, a draft resolution on the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (A/C.1/59/L.50). The draft resolution is a positive step forward in addressing the clear challenges that missile technology poses to disarmament, non-proliferation and international security. Over time, we hope to see an expansion of multilateral cooperation on that issue.

Ms. Borslin Bonnier (Sweden): First of all, let me say that Sweden stands firmly behind the statement made on behalf of the European Union by our colleague from the Netherlands. I would like to make some additional remarks from a national perspective.

The implications of the possible weaponization of outer space and the risk of a subsequent arms race are of great concern to my country. While acknowledging the positive role that space technology can play in meeting the global challenges to human development, we must understand that it is also a powerful tool not only for welfare but, potentially, also for warfare.

The legal regime for outer space provides fundamental rules on international responsibility and liability for national space activities, including for civil, military and national security purposes. A set of non-binding principles and declarations has been added to the treaty regime, and a code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation, the Hague Code of Conduct, has been adopted. We hope that all States will adhere to the Code.

Like the other States members of the European Union, Sweden supports the establishment of a subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with outer space. Sweden has suggested that, as a first step, informal technical meetings take place within the Conference involving a wider range of actors in the space field, such as international organizations, space agencies, space law academia and the private sector. The overall space sector, both civil and military, involves various stakeholders, and it would be fruitful to get their different perspectives. Since space activities are often of a dual-use nature and involve cross-cutting issues between civil and military activities, future work in the Conference on Disarmament would benefit from such an overall perspective.

In line with our reform discussions last week, one additional idea could also be to invite the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat to brief the First Committee, either this year or next year, on the work carried out within the framework of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention that tomorrow the General Assembly will consider in plenary meeting, the follow up to the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). A report by the Outer Space Committee (A/59/174) has been transmitted to the General Assembly for that review. The report provides a comprehensive and forward-looking assessment of the implementation process. and clearly demonstrates the importance and usefulness of space applications in addressing global challenges and for improving human living conditions. I believe that the First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament would benefit from the insight it conveys.

Mrs. Fernando (Sri Lanka): The prevention of an arms race in outer space is an issue of importance to my country, and I would refer delegations to our reference to that issue in the statement my delegation made in the general debate. We would also wish to add that on issues such as this one, which are of vital importance to international peace and security, there is indeed merit in reiterating every year in this Committee a draft resolution that draws widespread support, in order that its objectives may ultimately be achieved.

Ms. Cedeño Reyes (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela acknowledges all initiatives considering outer space as the common heritage of mankind, over which no nation has the authority to claim subjective rights or unilateral privileges. We believe that outer space must be used for peaceful purposes. This is in line with the humanism that underlies our foreign policy, which is based on strengthening the principle of the sovereign equality of States.

Once again, we support the proposal by China and the Russian Federation at the Conference on Disarmament to put in place an international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space. We are concerned about outer space being used as a theatre of operations for war in the context of an arms race.

Venezuela has been faithful to its commitment to promote the defence of outer space. We have signed three out of the five United Nations treaties on this subject — namely, the Outer Space Treaty, the Agreement on Assistance and the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects. Our country is also party to other international instruments related to outer space, such as the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, and the agreements relating to the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization and the International Telecommunication Union.

Lastly, we would like to recall that the Venezuelan Government has set into motion mechanisms for the establishment of an aerospace agency that, we hope, will begin to operate as soon as possible.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the thematic discussion on these two items.

I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.17.

Mr. Nagy (Hungary): On behalf of my Government, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.17, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

By the third preambular paragraph, the Assembly would bear in mind its call upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Conferences, including the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference and to provide such information and data in conformity with standardized procedure to the Secretary-General on an annual basis and no later than 15 April.

The fourth preambular paragraph welcomes the reaffirmation made in the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference that under all circumstances the use of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention.

In its fifth preambular paragraph, the draft resolution recalls the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference to hold three annual meetings of the States parties of one week duration each year commencing in 2003 until the Sixth Review Conference and to hold a two-week meeting of experts to prepare for each meeting of the States parties.

In its operative paragraph 1, draft resolution A/C.1/59/L.17 notes with satisfaction the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention and reaffirms the call upon all signatory States that have not yet ratified it to do so without delay, and calls upon those States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at an early date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention.

In paragraph 2, the draft resolution welcomes the information and data provided to date, and reiterates its call upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Paragraph 3 recalls the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on two topics in 2004: enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease; and strengthening and broadening national and international institutional efforts and existing mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases affecting humans, animals and plants. It also calls upon the States parties to the Convention to participate in its implementation.

In its operative paragraph 4, A/C.1/59/L.17 requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, including all necessary assistance to the annual meetings of the States parties and the meetings of experts.

Our expectation is that A/C.1/59/L.17 will generate a wide consensus and will be adopted without a vote, as has been the case in previous years.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Ruginski (Poland): It is an honour and a pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of Poland, the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), contained in document A/C.1/59/L.16.

The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is very timely. In our work on the draft, we concentrated on the progress achieved in the implementation of the CWC since the adoption of last year's resolution. There have been real achievements, which are reflected in this year's draft.

Special emphasis was placed on reaffirming the importance of the first special session and on the progress made in implementing the two action plans adopted by the States parties to the Convention, namely the Action Plan for universality of the Convention and the Action Plan on the implementation of article VII obligations.

We consider the text of this year's draft resolution to be well balanced. It shows the unequivocal support of the United Nations for the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. Our basic assumption and goal was to ensure the draft resolution's approval by consensus, as was the case last year. Consensus is crucial to ensure the unequivocal support of the United Nations for the implementation of the Convention.

The text of the draft resolution and changes from the previous year were set out in the full text of the statement of the delegation of Poland. Copies of the statement have been distributed to all delegations.

During extensive bilateral, open-ended consultations attended by more than 50 delegations, we were assured of support for the draft and of the readiness of First Committee delegations to join the consensus. Let me express my gratitude and thanks to all those delegations that participated in the extensive consultations on the new draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those consultations confirmed the existence of broad political support in all regions for the implementation of the Convention in its entirety. The consensus draft resolution presented today is a material expression of that support.

As in previous years, Poland remains the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Such sole sponsorship, which was supported in the consultations, ensures regional and political balance and broad support for the draft resolution.

The delegation of Poland asks that the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ri Jang Gen (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Let me comment on the remarks made earlier by the Japanese delegation.

Japan has been the victim of a nuclear holocaust, yet it has introduced nuclear weapons onto its territory. When Japan speaks about nuclear disarmament, it sounds hypocritical.

Regarding bilateral relations, it would be beneficial for the State of Japan to implement, in a spirit of sincerity, the Pyongyang Declaration, as announced by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan.

My delegation urges Japan to take a fair stand and not simply to side with the United States in the process of the resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.